

Congressman Ryan Announces SAFER Grant for City of Warren

\$5 Million Grant to Bring Back 11 Firefighters, Provide Funding for 13 Additional Hires

(Warren, OH) – Today, Congressman Ryan (OH-17) announced \$5 million allocated to the City of Warren through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program of the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Funding is set aside for the rehiring and recruitment of firefighters, covering 100 percent of wages and benefits for two years with no match necessary. These needed funds will allow the City of Warren to bring back 11 laid-off firefighters and hire 13 additional firefighters that were not replaced after retirements – bringing total staffing figures at the Warren Fire Department to 74.

“This is great news for the City of Warren – especially for the firefighters and their families who will return to work as a result of this funding,” stated Congressman Ryan. **“We have all been affected by layoffs in our community. Through working to adjust the guidelines of the SAFER grant program, I am proud to have played a part in changing the economic trajectory of this city for the better. Today’s announcement is about putting our people back to work so that they can put food on the table, send their kids to school, and share in the American dream.”**

During the Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations process, Congressman Ryan worked with the Homeland Security subcommittee to give greater priority in awarding SAFER grants to communities and fire departments that have suffered from the highest levels of unemployment

and budget constraints. After working with Chairman Price and Committee staff, Congressman Ryan was able to get language inserted in the Fiscal Year 2009 Homeland Security Appropriations Report. The specific language states, "The Committee urges FEMA to consider the prospect and occurrence of firefighter layoffs at a local fire department when evaluating SAFER grant applications."

City of Warren Mayor Michael O'Brien stated, **"Like so many cities across the United States, Warren is facing difficult budget challenges. I am proud of Congressman Ryan's leadership to address problems with the language of the SAFER grant program. As a result of his hard work, the City is now able to rehire essential safety personnel – allowing us to vastly improve our emergency response with minimal affect on the General Fund."**

"This achievement is the result of much work on behalf of our local firemen," said fireman and Local 204 President Marc Titus. "Just 18 months ago, SAFER guidelines did not allow funding to be used to rehire laid-off firefighters, only to hire additional firefighters. But thanks to the strong leadership of Congressman Tim Ryan, the SAFER guidelines were changed and signed into law. Layoffs devastate communities, and with this grant we are able to address hiring in the Warren Fire Department and move toward a brighter future for our city."

The SAFER program was created to provide funding directly to professional and volunteer fire departments in order to help them increase the number of trained, "front-line" firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the NFPA and OSHA. For additional information, visit <http://www.firegrantsupport.com/content/html/safer/>.

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